



Creating a Successful Orthotic Recall Program



This seven-step program will help you keep these patients compliant and returning, and will facilitate patient-to-patient referrals.

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Practice Management Pearls is a regular feature that focuses on practice management issues presented by successful DPMs who are members of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management.

The American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management (AAPPMP) has a forty-year history of providing its member podiatrists with practice management education and resources they need to practice efficiently and profitably, through personal mentoring and sharing of knowledge. To contact AAPPMP call 517-484-1930 or visit www.aappmp.org.

We all know that getting our patients to commit to what is best for their long-term health can be difficult at times. It is especially difficult if that item is expensive and increasingly harder to get them to “buy in” if the item isn’t covered by their insurance. Orthotics are first and foremost on the list. They are important for your patients, particularly your sports-minded ones.

The first step is obviously showing our patients how important the orthotics are for their biomechanical correction... but then what? Once you have them in the devices and hopefully they are loving them because they are keeping them out of trouble, how do you keep them compliant? At our office we have created a seven-step orthotic recall program that not only stresses the importance of continual

use but also encourages patients to keep them in optimal shape.

Step 1: Post Dispensing Email

This step—sent one week post-dispensing—is very important as it helps head off any questions, concerns, or problems they may be experiencing. This email provides a reminder of the break in instructions and discusses common problems patients may be experiencing, such as footwear fit, squeaking, and arch irritation. It pro-

vide some simple solutions and lets them know that you are just a phone call away if help is needed.

thing. This is also a great time to mention any other referral programs you have going on. For example, we have a referral raffle that changes quarterly, so it’s a great opportunity to remind them that referrals for any reason qualify.

Step 3: Last Call Second Pair Email

Six months after the dispensing is when our second pair discount “expires”. At this time, send yet another gentle reminder that if they want to

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vides some simple solutions and lets them know that you are just a phone call away if help is needed.

Step 2: Are You Loving Your Orthotics? Email

This email, sent out approximately six weeks after the dispensing of the orthotics, recommends a second pair of orthotics at a discounted price. If patients are loving their devices then they likely will want a second pair for the shoes they commute in or maybe for a pair of dress shoes. This email also asks them to recommend our orthotics to a family or friend who may be in need. Remember that if you resolved their foot pain, they will be happy to send others who may also be experiencing the same

take advantage of this fantastic price, this is their last opportunity. The discount you provide is up to you, but we usually charge \$25. You could also consider another perk such as an in-office promo: socks, nail polish, gift card. Be sure to remind them how much of an investment the orthotics were in the first place, and that this is an excellent opportunity to get a second pair which will prolong the life of the first pair. Depending on your patient demographic, you may choose to also do this by mail as an additional reminder.

Step 4: HSA Don't Delay Letter

Yes, you can actually use snail mail! There is definitely something

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different about a real piece of mail the patient has to open that will get their attention. This is in essence an “end of the year” reminder. Many patients today have high deductible plans and typically have a health savings account (HSA). Many times, this HSA money is

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“use it or lose it” by December 31st; therefore, it is a great time to gently remind all of your orthotic patients that they should not let this money go to waste and orthotics are a great item on which to spend it. You will be surprised how many never realized that this is an option.

Step 5: Annual Check-up Post Card

This one needs little explanation. Just like the dentist for a cleaning or the optometrist for glasses,

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you need to remind your patients of the importance of having the orthotics checked after a year of wear. While many will be fine, it is just good quality care to check in on them. Imagine your dentist saying, “Oh none of your teeth hurt, well, no need to check for a cavity, then.” Right?! Sounds crazy!! You need to get your patients seeing the importance of annual orthotic check-ups. One side note: at the time of a patient’s orthotic dispensing, we have them hand-address an envelope for this post card. Imagine getting something in the mail in your own handwriting? The curiosity alone draws them in!

Step 6: We Missed You Last Year

Jump back to email here and any patient who doesn’t get an annual orthotic check gets reminded yearly that you care about them and want to check up on their orthotics. The interesting finding here is that many patients come in with a whole new problem or chief complaint. The email just reminded them that you are there for any of their foot or ankle needs.

Step 7: Don’t Let Your Orthotics Wear Out

This last step is done via letter and can be sent any time after the annual email—consider 18-24 months post-orthotic casting. This letter is written to the patient

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by the doctors, stressing that now that their orthotics are over three years old, they are likely worn out and may be leading to undue stresses and strains on their foot structure. It warns of the dreaded stress fracture or plantar fasciitis recurrence if the orthotics wear out and are not properly supporting their foot.

It’s important to remember that your patients value your opinion. Orthotics are new to many patients and they rely on our advice to educate them on what is best for their foot care. These patients already know you and love you! It’s not only a chance to catch up with them and hear about their lives, but it is often from these simple orthotic checks that we can save patients from any new aches or pains. Remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! **PM**

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